

CONSIDERATIONS

Humbly Offered

By the People called *Quakers*,

Relating to the BILL for the restraining the

Licentiousness of the PRESS.

THIS BILL is, They Conceive, of like nature with the expired Act, 13, 14 Car. II. Cap. 33. and many Inconveniences did attend the Subjects by it whilst in Force, by which the said People were Sufferers.

To Prevent the Printing and Publishing of Seditious or Treasonable Books against the Government, and Scandalous Pamphlets tending to Vice and Immorality, is the Wisdom of all Good Governments, and must be the Desire of all Good Men.

But to Limit Religious Books to a License, where the Tolera- ted Perswasions are many, they Conceive, seems altogether Unsafe to all, but that whose Opinion the Licen- ser is of, who by this Bill hath Power to Allow what he shall judge Sound and Orthodox, or Reject what he shall Con- strue to be either Heretical, Seditious, or Offensive.

History and Experience have Taught how the Obscure Term of Heresy hath been Turn'd and Stretched against Primitive Christians, Martyrs, and Famous Reformers: Nor is it forgotten for what Reasons the * Writ *De Hære- tico Comburendo* was Abolished. * 29 Car. II. cap. 9.

'Tis no strange thing to have Learned * Men of the same Church, Interfere in their Opinions, concerning se- veral Texts of Holy Scripture; and 'tis Uncertain when their Opinions come to the Licenser, whether the World shall have the Best or no. * See Dr. South and Dr. Sherlock.

The different Apprehensions Men have of divers parts of Scripture, gives Birth to different Perswasions, who yet all make the Scripture the Test thereof; which by the Kind- ness of the Government being Tolera- ted, they Conceive, they ought to be left Free to Defend them, from the Misre- presentations, Prejudice, or Mistake of others, without being subjected to the Censure of a Licenser of a different Per- swasion.

They therefore humbly hope, that nothing may be Enacted that will lessen the Toleration, which they thankfully enjoy under the Favour of this, as well as the late Government.